

CITIZENS INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION TRUST (CITT)
External Affairs Committee Meeting
December 15, 2003
Stephen P. Clark Center
111 NW Streets, 10th Floor Conf. Room

Summary of Minutes

CITT MEMBERS

Hon. Luis Morse, Chairperson
Hon. John Cosgrove
Lt. Col. Colmenares
Hon. James Reeder
Miles Moss

COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Bruce Libhaber

OTHERS PRESENT

Hilda Fernandez, Executive Director, OCITT
Betty Alexander, DBD
Patty David, OCITT
Joe Ramallo, Mayor's Office
Melissa Vignes, Smart Commute
Joanna Santiago, OCITT
Virginia Diaz, OCITT
Alberto Parjus, OCITT
Barbara Bravo, OCITT
David Tinder, PWD
Aurelia Vasquez, OCITT
Patrice Rosemond, OCITT
John Prats, OCITT
James Murphy, SmartCommute
Nestor Toledo, OCITT

ROLL CALL

With a quorum being present, Mr. Morse, Chairman, called the meeting of the External Affairs Committee to order at 3:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Reeder moved approval of the agenda; seconded by Mr. Moss and carried without dissent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 10, 2003

Mr. Moss moved to approve the minutes of November 10, 2003. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reeder and carried without dissent.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None

LEGISLATIVE/INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

Florida Status Report

Virginia Diaz, Spec. Asst. Director, External Affairs, introduced Joe Ramallo, Director of Miami Dade County's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Ramallo stated that the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs provides legislative support to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and other county department on federal and state issues. Currently, Miami-Dade Transit is seeking to hire an experienced individual who is knowledgeable with the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts process and who can also serve as a resource to the CITT.

The county pursuing the reauthorization of all six rapid transit corridors. Mr. Ramallo stated that the county is in discussions with Dade's Congressional delegation. The county's primary priorities are the North corridor inclusive of the MIC Earlington Heights segment as well as the East-West corridor. Other Corridors that are included in the reauthorization request are Kendall, Northeast, South Dade and the Douglas Road Connector. In addition, the County is also seeking a Full Funding Grant Agreement for the North, Earlington Heights/MIC Connector and the East/West Corridors. These 3 projects are in excess of \$3 billion dollars. There is a current push to limit federal contribution for any given project to only \$500 million. We are trying to determine if there is a way to proceed and advance both corridors under Metro Rails phase II or to proceed with each project independent of each other. The County is seeking \$10 million for each corridor. It's important to communicate that the half-penny does not guarantees federal funding. There are over 200 projects competing for a very limited amount of federal dollars. Last year, 50 projects received significant funding in the new starts process.

Mr. Ramallo informed members that support is needed from other Florida delegation members as well as other members of Congress. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) needs to know that there is political support at the local level and that there is consensus. Additionally, the County is pursuing funding and a recommendation for the North and East-West projects to be included in the President's budget – expected to be released February 1, 2004.

Chairman Cosgrove asked Mr. Ramallo if his office has reviewed the 30-year pro forma and is the County being optimistic with the level Federal commitment. Mr. Ramallo responded that his office is currently reviewing the pro forma and will also be providing a copy to Dennis Vierra, the County's lobbyist for his review.

Hilda Fernandez, Executive Director, OCITT, requested regular legislative updates from MDT to ensure the Committee is kept abreast of any legislative issue that may impact the PTP.

Ms. Diaz stated that although not approved at the congressional level, the federal transit administration has an administrative policy limiting federal contribution to no more than \$100 million dollars a year with a cap of \$500 million for any given project. Each project is re-evaluated by the FTA annually and must receive approval from the FTA before it proceeds into each phase. All of these variables are now being discussed, including how many projects can be funded at one time.

Ms. Fernandez noted that the current 30-year pro forma includes the \$100 million dollar cap from the federal government as well as the 25% surtax proceeds and 25% state/local funding.

Municipal Status Report

Ms. Diaz: stated that many of the municipalities have called the office to relay that they are working towards meeting the December 31, 2003 deadline. Mr. Reeder has been instrumental in encouraging the other municipalities to meet the deadline.

Mr. Morse proposed to direct staff to inform each commissioner on the current status of each municipality. Also to inform them that a workshop and technical assistance was offered to those cities who requested it.

Mr. Cosgrove requested a motion to authorize the Chair of the External Affairs to forward a letter to each Miami-Dade Commissioner on the status on each municipality. The motion was approved by Mr. Morse and carried without dissent.

Mr. Reeder said that he would be meeting with the Dade League of Cities and forward a copy of a letter that was sent to each city.

Mr. Moss asked on the status on current cities, Miami Gardens and Doral. Mr. Cosgrove said that he asked staff to invite both cities to speak at the CITT meeting December 17, 2003. Ms. Diaz confirmed the attendance of the City of Doral to the next CITT meeting.

Mr. Cosgrove said it is the interest of the Trust to inform those municipalities that budgets are moving forward. Mr. Libhaber stated that the BCC can amend the Ordinance, however if that alters the PTP implementation of the plan it would go before the Trust.

Ms. Diaz stated that at the request of Chairman the Gas Tax Agenda Item was deferred for the next meeting, January 20, 2004.

SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUTER SERVICES PRESENTATION

Melissa Vignes, Outreach Specialist provided the members with an overview on the commuter services offered by South Florida Commuter Services (SFCS). She stated that the SFCS is a tri-county commuter assistance program. It promotes alternatives modes of transportation. The program is funded by Florida Department of Transportation. (a copy of the presentation was distributed).

Mr. Cosgrove thanked Ms. Vignes for the presentation and asked if she would make another presentation to the full CITT in February.

SMART COMMUTE PROGRAM

Ms. Diaz announced that the Smart Commute event is scheduled for December 19, 2003 at 11 am at the Douglas Road Metro rail station. The Trust members are encouraged to attend.

Mr. Morse mentioned that he asked staff to send a survey questionnaire to everyone who attended the Transportation Conference, November 8, 2003 to review how informative the conference was and what recommendations they have to improve future conferences.

Mr. Cosgrove stated that he does not think a transportation conference should not be held every year due to the extensive amount of planning and staffing involved.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being not further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

Hon. Luis C. Morse, Chairman